

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 5.E

DATE: September 6, 2012

SUBJECT: Class Attendance Guidelines and Policies

The system is in the process of implementing Starfish, an early alert tool that will allow campuses to more easily identify and work with students who are in danger of dropping out. While there are many behaviors that are exhibited by these at risk students, a common example is not attending class.

As we work to bring Starfish online, it was suggested that a discussion of attendance policies would be beneficial. Campuses were asked to provide copies of policies/guidelines and these are attached.

Each campus will be asked to briefly outline local practice.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Informational.

NSU

Northern State University faculty members have the academic freedom to develop their own policies on class attendance. Copies of the instructor's attendance policy must be distributed to students within the first week of each course. The policy should be stated in terms of the objectives of the course and should address student absences due to family or individual emergencies, student illness, weather conditions, college related activities, unexcused absences, and any other conditions. The instructor should also include policies regarding make-up work and how attendance (and/or absence) will affect grades. If a student believes an attendance policy is unfair, he or she may follow the Student Academic Grievance Procedure outlined in the Student Handbook.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will notify professors only when students must be absent from class due to a death in the family, hospitalization or other illness expected to exceed three class days. The purpose of the notification is to provide information and not to validate the reason given for the absence. When a student is absent from class because of a Northern State University activity, the provost and vice president for academic affairs will, at the request of the sponsoring faculty, notify the student's instructors that he or she is permitted to make up the work.

Mines

Attendance Policy

Every student is expected to attend each lecture or laboratory session for which he or she is scheduled. The faculty has allowed no system of authorized "cuts." A student who fails to attend classes regularly must satisfy such requirements as the instructor in a course may prescribe.

SDSU

South Dakota State University
Attendance Policy
(Adopted by Faculty Senate on April 27, 2010)
(Approved by Office of Academic Affairs on April 28, 2010)

SDSU is obligated to encourage its primary constituents, the students, to meet their responsibilities to themselves, their families, classmates, instructors and the taxpayers and donors who support higher education in South Dakota.

For these reasons, the following policy as related to attendance is outlined.

Policy: Teaching and learning is a reciprocal process involving faculty and students. Faculty members have an obligation of holding classes on a regular basis and students have an expectation to attend and participate in classes on a regular basis. Faculty members determine the specific attendance policy for courses under their direct supervision and instruction. Attendance procedures must be stated in written form and distributed or posted electronically to students at

the beginning of each course. If attendance is required and will impact grading, this expectation shall be included in the syllabus.

Absence due to personal reasons: Any exceptions to the faculty member's written attendance policy due to verified medical reasons, death of a family member or significant other, or verified extenuating circumstances judged acceptable by the instructor or the Office of Academic Affairs, will be honored. If a student has an accident, falls ill, or suffers some other emergency over which he/she has no control, the student needs to gather whatever documentation is available (e.g., copies of repair or towing bills, accident reports or statements from health care provider) to show the instructor. Such exceptions must be communicated and negotiated between the student and faculty member prior to the absence whenever possible. Absences for vacations, breaks, or personal interviews do not constitute a valid reason for absence.

Absence due to approved university-sponsored/recognized trips: Faculty and administration will honor officially approved absences where individuals are absent in the interest of officially representing the University. Appropriate sanctioned activities include:

- Collegiate club sports and competitions;
- Conferences and workshops recognized by the University not related to academics;
- Commitments on behalf of the University (Students' Association, Band, Choir, etc.);
- Intercollegiate athletics (refer to page 5 of this document for Student-Athlete Class Attendance Policy); and
- Professional activities recognized by the University related to academics (professional conference attendance, etc.)

Requests for excused absences must be submitted one week prior to the trip or event. Students must present the completed approved trip absence card to the faculty member prior to the trip or event to have an official excused absence. Faculty members are not required to honor incomplete or late cards.

Students with official excused absences: Students with excused absences will be given appropriate make up work or instructor-determined equivalent opportunities for obtaining grades as students who were in attendance. Students with official excused absences are not to be penalized in course progress or evaluation. However, should excused absences be excessive, the faculty member may recommend withdrawal from the course(s) or a grade of incomplete to the student.

Online course attendance policy: Attendance policies do apply in the online classroom. Faculty members determine the specific attendance policy for courses under their direct supervision and instruction. Attendance procedures must be stated in written form and made available to students on the first day of the course. Common strategies for demonstrating "attendance" in an online course include login requirements per week, an identified number of

discussion postings per week, consistent contact with peers and instructor, and/or other assignments as determined by the instructor. Also, students are expected to login to their class on the first day of the semester.

Mediation on absence: Arrangements should be negotiated with faculty members. If this is not possible, the students should go first to the department head, and if necessary, next to the dean. The student may contact the Office of Academic Affairs if conflict cannot be resolved at these levels.

NOTE: In addition to this statement, SDSU has a separate Student-Athlete Class Attendance Policy which was circulated by e-mail.

USD

From: Staben, Chuck A

Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2012 2:34 PM

To: Becvar, Laurie J; Daily, Dan L; Geu, Thomas; Keller, Michael J. (USD); Lawler, Michael J; Lindahl, Ron; Melmer, Rick; Moen, Matthew; Nettleman, Mary D; Schou, Larry

Cc: Keller, Christina; Bandy, James A; Martin, Tom C; Alvis, Jonathan D

Subject: Excused Absence and related academic policies

Each year I get questions about the Excused Absence Policy, which is available on the portal (<http://link.usd.edu/243>), but not widely recognized. I thought a reminder of this to you might be of value. The site also contains other policies. And, I apologize that some of the policies on this site do not conform, yet, to University policy format and logo usage.

Essentially, students should be excused from class to attend University sanctioned events that include, but are not limited to: intercollegiate sporting events for team members and band members; required field trips including ROTC field experiences; concerts and associated travel for USD orchestra and similar groups; participation in certain student government activities such as Board of Regents meetings. I also may approve other events, and generally will do so for experiences like a student presenting research at a conference, or other worthy events.

Thanks, and please feel free to share this notice as appropriate, though I tried to directly address some of the areas that I know have had concerns in the recent past, such as Athletics, Band, ROTC.

Dr. Chuck Staben

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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